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The City Telephone System in Astrakhan

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1. The Ministry of Communications (MinSvyaz'), through an Oblast Directorate of Communications (Oblastnoye Upravleniye Svyazi), administers the city telephone exchange (Gorodskaya Telefonnaya Stantsiya). Astrakhan has a dial telephone system (avtomaticheskaya telefonnaya stantsiya A TS). The entire telephone system of Astrakhan is underground.

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2. The underground lines and cables are encased in armored cable and enclosed within ceramic pipes of eight-inch diameter. These pipes were placed in ditches about one meter in depth along the streets of the city. Concrete manholes have been constructed at terminal points where the lines intersect each other. These manholes are placed along the main streets at irregular intervals. The manhole covers are round iron plates which have been marked with the words "MinSvyaz".
3. There are approximately 10,000 numbers in the city telephone system of which approximately 15% are for the use of private individuals. This system services about 253,000 people, the estimated population of Astrakhan. There are only one or two public pay phones in the entire city. I know there is one such phone located in the central office of the telephone system at 23 Kirov Street, which is at the corner of Kirov and Sovetskiy Streets. Most of the shops and stores in Astrakhan have telephones which individuals are generally allowed to use. I never heard of any individual or agency monitoring phone conversations in Astrakhan.
4. There are nine organizations and one district of the city operating switchboards which are linked to the city dial telephone system. These switchboards are of varying size and are all hand operated by personnel of each organization. There are varying numbers of city lines tied into the different switchboards through which calls are made between extensions of the switchboard and the city system. Usually there is only one number listed for each switchboard.

For example, if the number of the switchboard "More" is dialed by someone using a dial telephone in the city system, the operator on the board will take his call and connect him with the proper extension within the organization. The following are the switchboards and their approximate size which are connected to the city telephone system:

- (a) The switchboard (kommutator) at the shipyard i/n Kirov has between 50 to 70 extension numbers.

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- (b) The switchboard at the shipyard i/n Stalin has between 50 to 70 extension numbers.
 - (c) The switchboard at the settlement i/n Fridrik Engel's has between 50 to 70 extension numbers.
 - (d) The switchboard "Zarechnaya" at the settlement for the shipyard i/n Third International has about fifty extension numbers. The city telephone number listed for this switchboard is 92-51.
 - (e) The switchboard "Vokzal" at the main railroad station has no more than 100 extension numbers.
 - (f) The switchboard "M V D" at 23 Sverdlov Street has no more than 100 extension numbers.
 - (g) The switchboard "Ryb Komb i/n Mikoyan" in the village of Rybnyy has approximately 200 extension numbers.
 - (h) The switchboard "Trusovo" in the village of Trusovo has about 500 extension numbers. It was planned to extend the dial system to this area when I was last in Astrakhan in 1951.
 - (i) The telephone exchange (Telefonnaya Stantsiya) "More" is located on the Island of Zayachiy at the settlement of the Shipyard i/n Tenth Anniversary of the October Revolution. There are about 200 extension numbers on this switchboard and its number in the city system is either 92-51 or 61-59. There is a connecting cable between "More" and the city dial system. This cable passes under the Volga River in the vicinity of the Shipyard i/n Tenth Anniversary of the October Revolution.
 - (j) The Telephone Exchange (Telefonnaya Stantsiya) "Reka" is located on Pier #17 in the office building of the Volga Oil Tanker Steamship Agency (Volkatanker), Ministry of the River Fleet (MinRechFlot). There are about 700 extension numbers on this switchboard and its number in the city dial system is either 92-51 or 61-59.
5. The Chief of Reydtanker has an internal telephone system which is run between the department heads of the steamship agency. This system is not connected in any way to the "More" exchange and has about fifty numbers. This internal system was manufactured in the United States.

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